



April 3, 2020

COVID-19 Update

Dear Residents, Families and Visitors,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and impact Elgin County we are doing everything we can to adhere to Ministry and Public Health guidelines and keep our residents and staff safe.

As we continue to follow the advice of the Medical Officer of Health and provincial health advisors, we regularly reassess our programs/processes and we have confidence in our:

- Infection prevention and control measures
- Relationship with Southwestern Public Health and communicate with them multiple times/days
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Strategy for if/when a case is identified

Below please find the guidelines in place at all our long-term care homes. These decisions have not been made lightly and are at the direction of Ministry of Health and Public Health officials. We know our residents are among the most vulnerable and we are doing everything within our power to support and protect them.

Residents Restricted from Leaving the Home:

The Chief Medical Officer of Health released a directive that prohibit long-term care residents from leaving their homes except under medically warranted circumstances. The County of Elgin Homes are strictly adhering to the directive.

Medically necessary treatment will be authorized by attending medical staff in conjunction with our management team.

This is a difficult but necessary decision to help ensure our vulnerable residents are as safe as possible.

Postponing all Group Programs:

As another precautionary measure to prevent any further spread of any type of cold symptoms we are temporarily postponing all large group programs and activities. These activities will only be provided by our recreation staff in groups of less than five; and, on a one to one, basis as able and appropriate with social distancing in place.

Visitation:

In order to ensure a safe and secure environment in Long-Term Care Homes, the Ontario government has required that only essential visitors be permitted in our homes. Essential visitors are only those visiting a resident that is very ill or at end of life. Essential visitors are limited to one person at a time for a resident and the essential visitor will be provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

We are aware that family and friends are wanting to reach out to residents at this time. The County of Elgin Homes recreation departments have established support for family and residents for scheduled appointments of virtual visits through:

- Telephone
- Skype
- Facetime
- Email
- Messenger
- Zoom

To request communication with your loved one please contact the Recreation Department by telephone or e-mail:

- Terrace Lodge tlrec@elgin.ca
- Elgin Manor emrec@elgin.ca
- Bobier Villa bvrec@elgin.ca
- Or, email Tanya Noble tnoble@elgin.ca

Additionally, front line staff and/or a member of the management team, will contact the resident's substitute decision maker to provide updates on resident status and answer questions a minimum of a biweekly basis.

Some residents are celebrating birthdays or anniversaries during this time, please know that the staff and management of the Home are celebrating these events with your loved one on your behalf.

Items for Drop-Off

We recognize that residents are having celebrations and look forward to deliveries from family members. In order to keep residents and staff safe, we ask that you follow these guidelines for any items you wish to drop-off at the Home:

- All drop-offs must be pre-arranged, please call the business office, or a manager to ensure the items are acceptable
- There is a table/cart set up between the double doors at the front entrance to the Home which is labeled for pre-approved drop offs
- Ensure that the items are clearly labeled with the resident's name and double bagged
- Ensure that the items are items within the acceptable items list
- Acceptable items for drop-off include:
 - Hard wipeable containers – plastic
 - Unopened store-bought food in plastic or wipeable packaging
 - Clothing that can be sent to laundry for laundering
- Unacceptable items include
 - Homemade food
 - Anything packaged in cardboard

Mandatory Screening at Long Term Care Homes and Seniors Services Facilities

All Long-Term Care Home and Senior Services staff, contractors, delivery persons and essential visitors continue to be “actively” screened for COVID-19 by a dedicated person in each location. This involves questions regarding travel, possible exposure, and respiratory symptoms as well as taking the individual's temperature. **ANYONE that fails any part of the screening process will be asked to leave work and to contact public health, telehealth and/or their health care provider.** Any staff member who has travelled outside Canada must self-isolate for 14 days.

Strategy for if/When a Case is Identified

While the County of Elgin Homes staff and management are following Ministry and Public Health directives to support the health and wellness of residents and staff (our highest priority), the Homes are also planning ahead for communications and infection prevention and control requirements for if/when a positive case is identified. Ontario Public Health has established testing protocols for residents and staff which are followed in collaboration with Southwestern Public Health.

Should an outbreak occur, we would have an enhanced partnership with our public health unit to ensure every step is taken to protect our residents and staff. This would include, but is not limited to, the isolation of residents as directed by public health, utilization of Personal Protective Equipment, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, and continued monitoring of all residents for respiratory symptoms.

Many family members have inquired as to how/would residents and family members be notified if there was a positive case at the Home(s). Residents and family members would be notified through verbal (onsite for residents) communication, telephone communication to family members of any resident directly impacted and through written communication to all residents and family members.

High Risk Individuals

The Federal government has directed that ALL older adults 70 years of age and older and those individuals that are immunocompromised, stay home and “self-isolate”.

How can you help:

- Stay home and stay safe
- Please ensure to social distance a minimum of 2 metres
- Wash your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Avoid leaving your home unless absolutely essential (groceries, pharmacy, medical appointments)
- Set up and arrange for virtual visits with your loved one

We are thinking of you and realize how difficult this time is for you. While the information in this notice is current as of April 3, 2020, the situation and direction evolve daily, please check the Homes website for updated information – www.elginhomes.ca. If you have any questions, please contact myself or any member of our Management team.

Sincerely,

Michele Harris

Director of Homes and Seniors Services
519-631-1460 ext. 191